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C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 000560

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DEPARTMENT FOR AF/SPG, AF/EX

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/09/2018

TAGS: SU AMGT ASEC PGOV PREL

SUBJECT: ARMING LOCAL EMBASSY GUARDS AGAIN RAISED WITH MFA

REF: A. KHARTOUM 298

1B. KHARTOUM 459

Classified By: CDA Alberto M. Fernandez, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) As Embassy begins process of changing most vehicles' plates from diplomatic to regular license plates this week (reftel b), CDA Fernandez raised the outstanding issue of Sudanese Government permission for unarmed local Embassy Khartoum guards to be armed with defensive weapons while on official duty. CDA raised the issue on April 6 with Protocol Director Ambassador Ali Yusuf who told CDA that "there was agreement in principle" but nothing yet available in writing and no formal plan on how to proceed. He suggested that Fernandez raise it with higher authority. He noted that when this step may be approved, the Embassy will have to provide specific information on the weapons to be used and their serial numbers to the Sudanese Government.

12. (C) CDA followed up with MFA Under-Secretary Mutriff Siddiq the evening of April 8. Siddiq was familiar with the issue and offered the excuse that "we are working on it" but then noted that the five exposed US Embassy buildings sprawled across Khartoum can always be protected by additional police "should the need arise." He said that the Sudanese Government is sincerely committed to the safety of all diplomatic personnel, especially Americans, "after the tragic event in January" (the killing of two Embassy staff from USAID). Siddiq added that he knew for a fact that Sudanese Intelligence (NISS) officials had stepped up protection and surveillance of Embassy offices, staff and residences to provide greater security. CDA responded that "it was good to know about those steps" but the fact remained that, unlike most US embassies worldwide, ours had no US Marine Detachment and we need more protection.

13. (C) CDA Fernandez and POL chief raised the issue with Foreign Minister Deng Alor on April 10 in the course of a wide-ranging discussion on political issues (septel). CDA handed Alor copies of the three dipnotes requesting this assistance, the first from November 29, 2007 (before Alor took over the MFA), the next one in early February and the latest one on February 25. He thanked the Minister for progress on the dip plates but reminded him that this issue of defensive weapons for static guards had been discussed with Alor on March 24 (reftel a) and was still outstanding. Fernandez recounted the explanation he had heard from MFA officials that "there was agreement in principle" to allow this step to eventually take place. "They always say that to string you along," he noted, "you are right to bring this up to me again." Alor promised to follow up within the next few days.

FERNANDEZ